

The Girlboss 511

Chapter 511

Aria's mocking left the thugs incensed, though she was not afraid.

Having seen Frank fight, she knew for sure that these thugs would never win against Frank, and there were also his many connections!

Aria was certainly eager to sink her claws into a man who was rich, handsome, and well-connected. If it was not for Winter's persistent refusal to tell her where they lived, she would be showing up on Frank's doorstep to seduce him.

And now that she ran into him, she was not about to give up on such a perfect chance!

A thug like Tuck was nothing more than a worm compared to Frank!

Tuck was glaring coldly at Frank in turn. "Last warning, kid. Get out of here if you know what's good for you."

Frank frowned and glanced at Aria beside him.

He was in a bad mood, and these pests had to keep bothering him.

But he was unable to avoid Aria, so he had to brace himself and chase away the thugs. "Find someone else if you're seeking trouble. It's in your best interest not to mess with me."

"Fuck you!" Tuck promptly picked up an empty bottle and smashed it on Frank's head.

"Argh—!" Aria screamed, surprised that Tuck would really do that to Frank.

As Tuck threw away what remained of the bottle, he glared viciously at Frank. "Are you going to leave yet?!"

His two boys appeared thrilled, with one whistling. “Nice one, boss!”

“Are you alright, Frank?” Aria asked even as she scrambled to check Frank’s head, but he stopped her.

It was just a bottle—it would not even scratch him.

“I’m telling you for the last time...” Frank growled as he rose to his feet, his gaze darting between Tuck and the two thugs behind him as if unfazed. “Don’t mess with me. I’m in a bad mood.”

“Tuck, I think this guy is bad news.” One of Tuck’s boys hurried to him worriedly when he saw Frank was unharmed.

“Shut up!” the other thug snapped. “Bad news? He can’t even stand straight! Are you belittling Tuck here?”

Tuck was actually puzzled since he knew better than anyone how violently he smashed that bottle on Frank’s head.

Yet, not only was Frank not bleeding, but the way he appeared unfazed left him alarmed.

However, his boys’ exchange and Aria’s look of panic only encouraged him.

Picking up another bottle, he bellowed at Frank, “I’m in a worse mood than you are! You’d better leave now, or I’ll make you suffer! Haven’t you heard of me?! I’m Tuck Mahan—”

Clang!

Even before Tuck could finish, Frank picked up a bottle and smashed it on Tuck’s head so quickly no one could have seen it.

Shards shot everywhere, while Tuck fell to his knees with a loud thud, stunned.

“What the... Argh!!!” he mumbled and screamed when he touched his head and felt blood, dropping to his bottom as he stared at then still-drunken Frank and shrieked, “You hit me! You fucking hit me!”

Frank sighed.

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Frank wobbled up to Tuck, remaining impassive as he growled, “I warned you, but you wouldn’t listen. You can’t blame me for that.”

“He hit Tuck! Go!”

Tuck’s two thug friends promptly picked up empty bottles off the table as well. However, Frank had already smashed both their heads with each one bottle, leaving them dropping limply to the floor, their heads cracked and bleeding.

Even as one of them clutched his face and blood streamed down his forehead, he shrieked, “You hit Tuck! You’re a dead man!”

On the other hand, Aria was clapping excitedly upon seeing the three thugs being beaten up. “You’re so cool, Mr. Lawrence! Go on, kill those bastards!”

Frank shot her a cold, impatient glare in turn, and Aria’s thrill turned to fear.

After all, he would not have been bothered by those three pests if she did not start trouble out of nothing.

He threw away the broken bottle he was holding and started to leave... and was surprised when Tuck, still on the floor, grabbed him by the trousers.

Even as he bled all over his face, his expression contorted viciously. “Do you think you can just leave after hitting me?”

“Then what do you want?” Frank growled impatiently,

Tuck most likely had no idea, but Frank had been holding back—if he had not, Tuck and his thug friends’ heads would have blown apart.

Now, his eyes flashed murderously as Tuck stubbornly clung on to him.

“Just you wait! I’ll make you pay for hitting me!” Tuck snapped and pulled his phone out of his pocket with shaking fingers.

Before his call got through, a black-clad man in shades just happened to enter the bar.

Tuck’s face lit up with savage delight as soon as he saw the man, and he laughed at Frank madly as he snapped, “You’re a dead man!”

Dropping his phone, he scrambled toward the man in shades, hugging the man’s feet as he bawled, “Mr. Yorkman! Please, you have to help me! Someone just attacked me!”

Mr. Yorkman appeared surprised and promptly kicked Tuck several meters away as he snorted in disgust, “Who the hell are you?”

“Did you forget? I’m Tuck Mahan! My brother Zuck Mahan posted bail to have me released!”

His cries left Mr. Yorkman doing another double take, though he finally remembered. “Oh, the Mahan family’s good-for-nothing? So? What happened to your head?”

Tuck was actually pleased to be called a good-for-nothing—if anything, he was delighted!

“That’s him, Mr. Yorkman! He stole my girl and attacked me in public! You have to help me!”

Mr. Yorkman snorted, clearly here for something else.

He would rather not get involved with Tuck, but the bar was already in an uproar and people were watching him.

He cleared his throat given who he was and turned toward where Tuck was pointing.

Just as he was about to flex authority and say something to calm down the situation, he saw who Tuck was pointing at.

“Mr. Lawrence?!” he exclaimed as he took off his shades—the man turned out to be Burt Yorkman!

“Hmm?” Frank actually appeared bored when he saw who it was and returned to his seat.

On the other hand, the crowd grew restless.

“Wait, isn’t that Riverton’s top officer Burt Yorkman?”

“Gosh, it really is!”

“A thug like Tuck actually knows Burt?!”

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Most of the onlooking crowd gasped in surprise when they saw Burt’s face since he was a famous person.

The fact that he was here already meant that something big was about to go down!

A woman with thick makeup even sighed from the middle of the dance floor. “Well, jig’s up. I was just saying that the kid is quite a looker, but he had to get physical with Tuck. It’s over for him now—Tuck is friends with Burt.”

“I heard the people he arrests end up half-dead. The kid’s unlucky to run into him today.”

“Tch. It’s his fault for flirting with Tuck’s girl...”

“Open your eyes. She’s the one throwing herself at him.”

Even as the crowd argued among themselves, Aria was shaking in fear.

Burt Yorkman, the top enforcement officer of Riverton, was known to be as strong as he was ruthless.

She might be a college student, but she had a very active nightlife. She came to learn of Burt, and more importantly, how things ended badly for those who found themselves on his naughty list.

“I... I...” Aria glanced at Frank, too scared to finish her sentence.

At the same time, she regretted not knowing that Tuck was friends with Burt.

Frank was as strong as he was well-connected, but there was simply no way he could hold his own against someone like Burt.

Despite bleeding all over his face, Tuck was smiling savagely. “You’re done, kid! With Mr. Yorkman here, you’re—”

Even before he could finish, he felt a leather shoe hitting him squarely in the face.

He was flying through the air before rolling all over the dance floor, his front teeth still hanging in the air in his wake.

“What?!”

Tuck’s thug friends gaped, not expecting this turn of events.

Was Burt not supposed to be their friend? Why did he send Tuck flying with a kick?

And that kick must really hurt... Tuck’s face would definitely be disfigured from now on!

That was when Burt wheeled on them with a vicious glare. “Take him and leave. Don’t ever let me see you around again!”

The two thugs were already scared out of their minds and quickly carried Tuck out away and fled The Dynasty for their lives.

While the crowd including Aria looked on in shock, Burt walked up to Frank, greeting him respectfully. “I’m so sorry those pests soured the evening for you, Mr. Lawrence.”

Frank held up a hand, gesturing that he did not mind before beckoning at him to sit.

“What?!”

Everyone thought they were dreaming to see Burt basically fawning over Frank!

“And you are...?” Burt then glanced politely at Aria.

Aria sprang to her feet, uncomfortable with sitting right then. “Officer Yorkman, I’m a junior student at Riverton University—”

“She’s my sister’s friend who just happened to run into me,” Frank said neutrally, pushing a bottle of beer to Burt.

“Oh, Ms. Lawrence’s friend?” Burt nodded respectfully at Frank.

Aria’s breathing turned rushed as she flushed, almost fainting from sheer excitement.

She had never expected to make the acquaintance of someone important as Burt here, and she could brag about this for years!

And Winter’s brother was so well-connected that he could well own Riverton... Hell, not even the governor commanded so much influence!

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Seeing Aria blinking her twinkling eyes at Burt, Frank waved her off. “I need to speak with Officer Yorkman here in private. You should leave for the night.”

“Okay.” Aria pouted, reluctant but not stupid.

The men were clearly going to talk shop, and interfering would only earn Frank’s displeasure.

As such, she had to leave The Dynasty, feeling dissatisfied.

Even as she tugged on her handbag and stepped out, she was cursing Winter under her breath, “Oh, Winter, you minx!”

Winter had never told her Frank was so impressive that Riverton’s top law enforcement officer would suck up to him.

What, was Winter afraid she would jump him?

Naturally, Aria misblamed Winter.

Even Winter was not aware that Frank commanded so much respect, believing that Frank was only backed by the Turnbolls as an executive working under Vicky and receiving her favor.

Impressive, sure, but not at the level of having a law enforcement officer serve at his beck and call.

Still, Aria was dissatisfied about missing such a golden opportunity.

Glancing at the Maybach parked beside the road, an idea took root in her mind.

—

Meanwhile, Burt drank several bottles with Frank and started to get tipsy as well.

Still, he was strong enough to withstand the alcohol without using his vigor to burn it off.

“Mr. Zurich called me, saying you’re in a bad mood,” he said. “He told me to come drink with you.”

“Oh, Trevor... Hmph. He always meddles.” Frank huffed as he took another sip from his bottle.

Musing to himself for a while, he then asked Burt, “What’s your level at present?”

“I’ve fully mastered vigor,” Burt said and sighed upon being reminded of his rank. “I’ve remained stuck there for the longest time, with no way of reaching Birthright rank. Sage Lake Sect treats me like their dog, refusing to teach me any of their martial discipline.”

“But you know what’s worse? When I found a century-year old Goldeater Cane a few years ago, I was about to refine it when someone leaked the news, and Sage Lake Sect took it!”

Burt rambled on, fueled by alcoholic rage. "I found the Elemental Wonder myself, using all my resources, but Sage Lake Sect simply told me that I didn't need it and took it!"

Bang!

He slammed his fist on the table with rage.

"A Goldeater Cane?"

Frank was surprised to hear that name, since it was the gold Elemental Wonder.

Before this, he had already used various methods to gather the fire, water, and earth Elemental Wonders. Now, he just needed the gold and wood Elemental Wonders to recover his peak form.

However, he was disappointed since it had been years ago, and Sage Lake Sect would surely have refined the Goldeater Cane into pills by now.

Still, Burt was surprised by Frank's unusual reaction to his mention of the Goldeater Cane.

"Could you be interested in the Goldeater Cane too, Mr. Lawrence?"

"Yes," Frank admitted. "I was wounded back when I fled Mystic Sky Sect and my condition still lingers. I need all five Elemental Wonders to recover."

Burt nodded. "In that case, I have an idea."

"You have an idea?" Frank cheered up right then, almost forgetting that the top law enforcement officer of Riverton would definitely have his connections. "Are you able to find other Elemental Wonders?"

"No, that's not what I mean." Burt shook his head. "Elemental Wonders are so rare that even years of searching only landed me a small shoot of the Goldeater Cane."

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Burt certainly left Frank mystified. “So, you’re saying...?”

Burt flashed an enigmatic smile in turn. “I have a hunch that the Goldeater Cane that Sage Lake Sect took from me has not been made into pills yet. It was no more than a seemingly, and if it wasn’t needed urgently, they must keep it nurtured with precious materials to ensure its survival.”

“Moreover, I’ve put two and two together—when Quinn Ocean and Drakon Salazar visited the Salazars recently, their intention was to get married. Sal Ocean, the geezer you’ve killed, was supposed to officiate the wedding.”

Frank’s eyes lit up. “That means...”

“Yes. Sage Lake Sect would’ve given the Goldeater Cane to the Salazars as dowry, and they probably still have it right now.”

As Burt broke down the facts, Frank frowned despite feeling hopeful. “The Salazars definitely wouldn’t sell me the Goldeater Cane with all the bad blood between us.”

“That’s for sure.” Burt chuckled coolly. “And I would have been disavowed from Sage Lake Sect when Quinn returned to them, so the Salazars wouldn’t give it to me either. And if we tried taking it by force, they’d definitely rather destroy it than give it to us.”

“In that case...”

Burt sighed lengthily as they finally cut to the chase. “My friends in Sage Lake Sect have informed me that they’re up to something big in a couple days. Dejan Ocean, their elder, will be coming personally.”

“Really?” Frank raised a brow. “The fish took the bait, I see.”

“Yes.” Burt nodded. “I know you want to take down Sage Lake Sect all at once. For their part, they wouldn’t want to draw suspicion by sending everyone they had after some little-known youth. If they did, word would spread and Cloudnine Sect would catch on.”

Frank narrowed his eyes. “So...?”

“I’ll act as a double agent and contact Sage Lake Sect,” Burt explained. “I’ll drop hints that you want the Goldeater Cane and suggest they use it as bait to lure you in. If you trust your strength, you can eliminate them while getting the Goldeater Cane—that’s killing two birds with one stone.”

Watching Burt’s serious expression, Frank smiled and asked, “You’re not going to betray Sage Lake Sect, are you?”

A drop of sweat trickled down Burt’s cheek right then, and he quickly lowered his gaze as he said, “What are you saying? I’ve served as their dog for years while gaining your favor after considerable difficulty. I’d never turn against you!”

Frank nodded. “Fine. If we succeed, I’ll help you reach Birthright rank.”

His assurance left Burt doing a double take, before exclaiming in delight, “Thank you, Mr. Lawrence! However, there are risks in this plan—we need to be careful here.”

“Don’t worry.”

They kept chatting through the night, with Burt asking for instructions on martial arts.

Frank would answer everything while drinking, since he found Burt to be a rare potential.

Even though Sage Lake Sect kept denying Burt anything solid, he had managed to combine various martial disciplines to develop his vigor on his own.

One could even call it prodigious, and Frank only felt more contempt toward Sage Lake Sect.

“Hmph. They have such profound talent right within their grasp, but they refuse to appreciate him.”

He was not aware that Sage Lake Sect suffered severely from nepotism, and fringe apprentices like Burt would always be bullied more than they were groomed.

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Truth be told, Burt had reached the position he was in today by his own merit and surprised even Sage Lake Sect.

As such, there were some sect members who became wary of Burt rising to power.

Meanwhile, both Frank and Burt drank a lot as they stayed at The Dynasty past midnight, having finished so many bottles that even the waiters and waitresses were starting to get afraid.

“Mr. Lawrence, allow me to drive you home,” Burt offered.

He did not drink as much as Frank since he was asking for his instructions and was more or less sober.

“N-No...” Frank slurred. “I just need to get a cab... Go home... Remember the techniques I taught you and train properly. Meditate on it.”

“Yes!” Burt was earnestly grateful, since Frank was already treating him a million times better than Sage Lake Sect.

As he helped Frank out of The Dynasty, he looked up to find Aria crouching in front of Frank’s Maybach, shivering from the cold.

“You’re still here?” he asked.

Aria quickly leapt to her feet, rubbing her cheeks as she grinned. “Well, I was just thinking Frank had a lot to drink, and he’d need someone to drive him home.”

“You can drive?” Burt studied Aria from head to toe.

Being a law enforcement officer for years, he could tell immediately that the girl was naive.

However, since Frank said Aria was Winter’s friend, he did not dwell on it.

“I do,” Aria replied gingerly. “The college offers driving lessons, and I’ve been driving for a year.”

“Good. Take him home to Skywater Bay. Remember, you have to send him home...”

“Sure.”

Aria nodded tamely, having waited for so long just for that.

Taking Frank’s key from his pocket, she got in the Maybach and fired up the ignition.

“Hel... Hel...” Frank was too drunk and started mumbling.

“Don’t worry, Frank. I’m taking you straight home.” Aria smiled despite her impatience and sped off right in front of Burt.

Burt was in turn clenching his knuckles impatiently—he wanted to rush home to start training, since Frank’s instructions were more than vital to him!

—

On the other hand, the Maybach stopped before long.

Instead of Skywater Bay, Aria took several detours and eventually took Frank to White Court Hotel.

She called a bellboy who carried Frank to a room.

After taking a careful bath, she kept her clothes off and sneaked into Frank's arms.

Before she slept, she sent his location to her best friend Winter.

When Winter entered the room at noon the next day, she shrieked, "Ahh—!"

"Hmm...?" Frank sat up, rubbing his head which ached from a nasty hangover.

He immediately saw Aria in his arms, as well as Winter who was grasping at the door and staring at them in disbelief.

"Frank, what..." Winter's jaw hung open, unable to say a word.

Eventually, she came to her senses and slammed the door shut before she turned and fled, sobbing.

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Frank then touched himself and realized that he was naked, just like Aria was under the blanket.

"What the hell? Did I..." He rubbed his forehead as he tried his best to remember, but he could only remember that he was drunk even as he taught Burt martial arts and left the bar with him... and nothing else.

"Frank..." Aria stirred just then, holding the blanket to herself as she stared at him vulnerably.

She only said his name and nothing else, and the look in her eyes made it look as if his animal side took over and forced himself on her.

Frank only felt frustrated, just as he could not help suspecting that he really went out of line.

But why could he not remember anything?

On the other hand, Aria could see that he was thinking and quickly continued her helpless act. "It's alright, Frank. I was willing, and I'll talk to Winter myself. You don't have to take responsibility."

Frank looked her in the eye and breathed a long sigh before turning his back to her awkwardly. "Don't worry—I'll take responsibility for my actions and talk to Winter. I'm not scum. You could move into Skywater Bay if you want too... There are plenty of rooms over there."

"Yeah!" Aria threw her arms around him and kissed his neck, only leaving Frank further awkward.

After breakfast, he drove Aria to campus.

On the way back, he began thinking about what happened last night and called Burt.

"What?" Burt exclaimed in surprise. "Aria was supposed to drive you home last night... Are you saying she didn't?"

"Oh, uh, never mind," Frank said and hung up, sitting in his car while aching with regret.

Helen's words had hurt him thoroughly yesterday to the point that he wanted to drink away his sorrows.

And once he did, things went out of control...

"What a mess." He sighed lengthily again, but he decided against hiding anything.

He and Helen were way past making amends now, and Vicky was engaged anyway. There was no issue for him to be with Aria, even though there was an uncomfortable sensation stuck in his heart.

Because he felt nothing for Aria.

—

Returning to his mansion in Skywater Bay, Frank stepped through the front door to find Carol cleaning the drawing room.

“Where have you been, Mr. Lawrence? Were you in danger?”

Carol was really worried for Frank since he was gone the entire night, especially after what happened before.

“Nothing. Just a little busy,” he replied vaguely, and returned to his room.

He was getting tired with one annoyance piling up with another.

Hence, he cleared his mind and started to train without a sense of time.

When he was done, his phone rang.

“Frank Lawrence, I hope you can attend my grandfather’s funeral tomorrow.”

It turned out to be Helen, but her voice was as cold as a machine.

“I will.”

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Frank was hesitant if he should ask Helen what was wrong, but Gina suddenly started snapping sarcastically from the other end, "What's holding you up, Helen? You called him and told him, and that's all you have to do. Mr. Graves is waiting for you downstairs! He wouldn't even be allowed here if not for your grandfather's sake!"

Beep.

Helen hung up right then, while Frank shook his head self-deprecatingly, still holding his phone.

Still, he smelled food just then and stepped out to the dining table.

However, it ended up becoming an awkward table of four with Frank himself, a surprised Carol, a silent but scowling Winter, and Aria, who was grinning ear to ear.

Eventually, despite the awkward vibes, Winter looked up at her friend impassively and asked, "What are you doing here, Aria?"

"Frank told me to come." Aria held a fork over her lips, looking especially innocent since she was wearing her Riverton University uniform without her usual flamboyance.

Turning toward Carol, she exclaimed, "Your cooking is fantastic, Madam Zims. It's much better than my mom's."

Carol was befuddled with her daughter's reaction, as she was scowling at her friend who had just come over for dinner.

"Thank you," she replied. "Feel free to help yourself to more."

"Thank you."

On the other hand, Frank knew it was time he manned up.

Straightening himself, he gave Winter a guilty look as he said, “Winter, something happened last night and I’m sorry, but I must take responsibility too.”

Carol saw in turn that Winter was still hanging her head in silence and asked in concern, “What’s wrong, Winter? Did Frank do something to upset you?”

Frank began, “Madam Zims, it has nothing to do with Winter. I—”

“I’ll just say it out loud.” Aria suddenly raised her chin, cutting him short.

There was no hiding the excitement in her face as she looked straight at Winter and said, “Frank and I slept together last night, and he said... he’ll take responsibility. But that’s fine—we’re still besties, right, Winter?”

“Is that true, Frank?”

Carol gaped at Frank in disbelief at Aria’s words—she did not think that Frank was that casual about relationships.

Frank braced himself and nodded.

Bang!

Winter suddenly slammed her fork and knife on the table, growling coolly, “I’m full.”

With that, she strode back to her room, slamming the door shut deafeningly.

“Winter...?” Frank was puzzled as to why Winter was upset.

Aria was her best friend, but she should not be that angry...

Carol sighed in turn. "It's alright, Frank. I'll talk to her."

She entered Winter's room to find her lying sprawled over her bed, bawling.

"How could she do this! She's my best friend!" Winter threw herself into Carol's arms and bawled when she saw her. "I thought of her as my sister, and I even told her I like him... Why did she do this?"

"Oh, don't be sad, dear. All men are like this." Carol sighed as she comforted her, patting her head—she certainly understood what she was going through.

"No!" Winter cried. "She must have seduced Frank. He's different from the rest—he's not that casual!"

Carol sighed lengthily, unsure what to say when her daughter was defending Frank so stubbornly.

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Frank had no idea that Winter was miserable that Aria stole her beloved.

He merely presumed that his drunken fumble made things awkward between Winter and Aria, and he certainly had no words of comfort for that.

As such, his frustration only grew as he listened to Winter's sobs.

Beside him, Aria was hovering around him, placing food on his plate while sliding pointed glances at the direction in which Winter left.

She could not help it—Frank was as rich as he was successful, and Winter could not blame anyone that he was taken since she did not seize him.

—

Henry Lane's funeral was held the next day.

Vicky called early in the morning to inform Frank that she was busy and that he should attend as Grande Pharma's representative.

Frank did not dwell on it and drove Aria to Grande Square to pick out a couple of dresses suitable for the funeral.

Aria was excited through it all and dragged Winter across every specialty store before finally picking a black dress tailored by a famous designer worth over five million.

"Wrap it up," she told the retail assistant haughtily.

Though Frank would not actually miss five million, not to mention that he had Grande Corp's gold card, Aria's attitude left him truly uncomfortable.

When they left, they ran into Jean Zims.

She was clearly unfriendly toward Aria. "So that's how it's going to be, huh?"

Aria did not flinch, even puffing her ample bosom as she snorted. "Who Frank likes is his choice."

Jean pointed a finger at Aria's face and leveled a stern look at Frank. "Do you really like this woman, Frank?"

Frank frowned, but before he could say a word, Aria stepped between them, her expression cool. "What are you talking about?"

“You know what I mean.” Jean snorted. “We turned a blind eye when you slept around before. Do you really think you can face Winter after what you did, when she thought the world of you?!”

Aria glowered as Jean exposed her.

“Me, sleeping around? That’s slander!” she snapped before suddenly smiling. “What, so you’re both jealous? You and Winter kept calling me bestie, but you’re both just resentful!”

Smack!

Jean was as short-tempered as she was poor in verbal fencing and simply strode up to slap Aria resoundingly across her face!

“You bitch. We’ve seen your true colors now,” Jean growled under her breath.

Aria was left clutching her face, going mad right then.

“You hit me?! How dare you?!” she shrieked before turning toward Frank, “Did you see that?! She just slapped me!”

“Alright—both of you should just calm down,” Frank said as things started to get heated.

He caught Aria before she could lunge at Jean, although he was frowning at Jean too. “I messed up with Aria, and I have to take responsibility.”

“Hmph.”

Jean snorted, glancing between them. “Mr. Lawrence, I’m sure you’re not one to fall for temptation too. Just watch your back—that woman you’re with is a snake.”

With that, Jean strode off.

On the other hand, Aria struggled violently to free herself from Frank's palm and shrieked manically, "What are you doing?! You saw her hit me, and not only did you not hit back, but you also stopped me?"

Frank frowned again. "You're friends. Don't make things so awkward."

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Aria glared at Jean as she left and shrieked, "Well, we're no longer friends now!"

Jean did not look back but raised her hand over her head to give Aria the middle finger.

"Alright, stop drawing attention already." Frank intercepted Aria and quickly left Grande Square as a crowd looked on.

Aria's scowl only faded after Frank bought her a ten million dollar diamond necklace.

She was still obsessing over the green diamond pendant that Frank gave Winter all those days and wanted everything Winter had too!

—

Henry lay in a casket within Lane Manor.

Helen, wearing a black dress with a white flower brooch, was staring at it fixedly.

Gina, Chaz Graves, and everyone else tried to move her, but she refused to budge.

Chaz was even smiling as he dropped to a crouch beside her. "Don't worry, Helen. I've asked my dad to invite every Riverton bigwig to give your grandfather a proper send off. I'm sure he can rest in peace to see them here."

Gina's eyes lit up at his words. "You really are thoughtful, Mr. Graves! Go on, Helen—thank him already!"

"Thanks," Helen said numbly and emotionlessly.

Chaz scowled and swore under his breath, "I tried playing nice, bitch."

Did she even know the lengths he had gone through to ask his father for such a favor, and all he got was that apathetic thanks?

"Mr. Gerald Simmons, the Chief of General Affairs, has arrived!" a receptionist announced just then.

"What? When did the Lanes get that friendly with Gerald Simmons?"

The small and medium-sized enterprise owners were left aghast, watching as Gerald led his son Tidus inside amid everyone's warm greetings.

"Oh, it's the honor of a lifetime to have you here, Mr. Simmons." Gina promptly approached Gerald with a fawning smile, even shooting Helen looks.

Helen, however, still did not move.

Gerald completely ignored Gina in turn. Walking straight to Henry's casket with a grim face, he held a minute of silent mourning.

Then, walking up to Helen, he placed a hand on her shoulder. "My condolences."

Helen looked up and nodded. "Thank you for coming, Mr. Simmons."

“It’s only right that I do.” Gerald nodded in turn and sighed. “Frank really admired him, even getting a painting from me for his birthday. You never know what’s coming, I guess.”

“Please take a seat.” Chaz came up to Gerald after waiting for the right moment.

Gerald glanced at him before nodding impressively as he and his son stepped away from the casket.

“Robert Quill, governor of Riverton!”

“What?! First the CGA, and now the governor? Are the Lanes really that well-connected?!”

The small business owners were even more shocked at that—they had never heard anything about the Lanes having so many friends in high places!

“Mr. Tim Yates, chief of the Riverton commerce guild!”

“Kenny Sparks, owner of Skyblade Dojo!”